



Reopening New York

Higher Education Guidelines



This guidance is intended to address all types of in-person higher education institutions, including but not limited to community and junior colleges, universities, graduate and professional schools, medical schools, and technical schools. Higher education institutions must develop and submit a plan for reopening and operating for the duration of the COVID-19 public health emergency. See "Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Higher Education" and "Checklist for Higher Education Institutions Reopening Plans" for more information.

During the COVID-19 public health emergency, all operators of higher education institutions are accountable for staying current with any updates to local, state, and federal requirements related to higher education and auxiliary activities and incorporating those changes into their operations. This guidance is not intended to replace any existing applicable local, state, and federal laws, regulations, and standards.

	Mandatory	Recommended Best Practices
Physical Distancing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Any time individuals come within 6 ft. of another person who does not reside in the same residence (i.e., roommate), acceptable face coverings must be worn. This provision should not be construed to require physical distancing among roommates or to require face coverings be worn while inside an individual's residence.✓ In consultation with the local health department, identify where students who are exposed to, or infected with, COVID-19 will be residing and how daily needs (e.g. food, medication) will be met if it becomes necessary to have a period of quarantine or isolation.✓ Reference relevant industry-specific guidelines provided by the Department of Health – and available on the New York Forward website – for operations of dining halls, research, office workspaces, gyms, transportation, retail stores, and other activities, as applicable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Ensure that a distance of at least 6 ft. is maintained among individuals while on campus, inclusive of employees and students, to the extent possible and when seated in a classroom setting or meeting, unless safety or the core activity (e.g. moving equipment) requires a shorter distance or individuals are of the same residence.✓ Modify or reconfigure spaces and/or restrict the use of classrooms and other places where students and employees congregate, so that individuals are at least 6 ft. apart in all directions (e.g. side-to-side and when facing one another) and are not sharing workstations without cleaning and disinfection between use.✓ Consider a mix of traditional in-person and remote classes depending on student needs (e.g. vulnerable populations), technological capabilities, and/or immediately following historically high-travel periods (e.g. limiting in-person classes during holiday travel periods), among other measures to reduce in-person congregation.✓ When COVID-19 cases develop, consider restricting social contact and mobility across campus, particularly in affected areas.✓ Reduce bi-directional foot traffic using tape or signs with arrows in hallways or spaces throughout campus. Mark 6 ft. distance circles around desks, workstations, and common areas where gathering is likely to occur (e.g. libraries, study centers, lawns).✓ Determine which on-campus facilities (e.g. libraries, study lounges, recreational facilities) will be closed to the general public (i.e., not students and employees) or offer limited, specific hours to members of the general public.✓ Limit visitors to "invited guests" only, who are expected to abide by all building/campus protocols, and require student/institutional IDs to enter on-campus buildings.

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	Mandatory	Recommended Best Practices
Physical Distancing		<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Stagger schedules to allow more time between classes to reduce congregation in walkways and buildings.✓ Shift design of class schedules to create cohorts or sections of students (e.g. A/B schedule or course sections) to reduce risk of transmission among students.
Protective Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Any time individuals come within 6 ft. of another person who does not reside in the same residence (e.g. roommate), acceptable face coverings must be worn.✓ Advise employees, students, and visitors that they are required to wear face coverings in common areas or situations where social distancing may be difficult to maintain, such as riding in elevators, entering/exiting classrooms or student centers, and traveling around the campus.✓ Provide face coverings to employees who directly interact with students or members of the public while at work, at no cost to the employee.✓ Train employees on how to adequately put on, take off, clean (as applicable), and discard PPE. See CDC guidance for additional information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Put in place plans to limit the sharing of objects, such as laptops, notebooks, touchscreens, and writing utensils, as well as the touching of shared surfaces, such as conference tables.
Hygiene, Cleaning, and Disinfection	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Adhere to hygiene, cleaning, and disinfection requirements from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Department of Health (DOH) and maintain logs that include the date, time, and scope of cleaning and disinfection. Identify cleaning and disinfection frequency for each facility type and assign responsibility.✓ Provide and maintain hand hygiene stations throughout the institution, including handwashing with soap, running warm water, and disposable paper towels, as well as an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing 60% or more alcohol for areas where handwashing is not feasible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Make hand sanitizer available throughout common areas and use touch-free dispensers where possible.✓ Place receptacles around the institution for disposal of soiled items, including PPE.✓ Provide disposable wipes to employees so that commonly used surfaces (e.g. keyboards, desks, remote controls) can be wiped down before/after use.✓ Install touch-free amenities (e.g. water fountains, trash receptacles, paper towel dispensers), where feasible.

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	Mandatory	Recommended Best Practices
Hygiene, Cleaning and Disinfection (cont'd)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Conduct regular cleaning and disinfection of facilities and more frequent cleaning and disinfection for high-risk areas used by many individuals and for frequently touched surfaces. Refer to Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) products identified by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as effective against COVID-19.✓ Ensure regular cleaning and disinfection of restrooms.✓ Provide for the cleaning and disinfection of exposed areas in the event an individual is confirmed to have COVID-19, with such cleaning and disinfection to include, at a minimum, all heavy transit areas and high-touch surfaces. Refer to CDC guidelines.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Best practices to implement in residential, shared (communal) bathrooms include but are not limited to:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Install physical barriers between showers, toilets, and sinks if 6 ft. of separation isn't feasible.• Use paper towel dispensers in lieu of air dryers.• Where the layout of the building permits, designate communal bathrooms on a residential hall floor for use by specific rooms or individuals to limit cross contamination and assist with traffic control.• Limit storage of personal items within communal bathrooms.
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Affirm you have reviewed and understand the state-issued industry guidelines and submit reopening plans prior to reopening.✓ Conspicuously post completed reopening plans for employees and students to access.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Engage with campus community members (e.g. employees, students, interested organizations) when developing reopening plans.✓ Develop a communications plan for students, parents or legal guardians, employees, and visitors that includes reopening-related instructions, training, and signage, and a consistent means to provide them with information.✓ Encourage all students, faculty, staff and visitors to adhere to CDC/DOH guidance regarding the use of PPE, specifically face coverings, when distance of 6 ft. can't be maintained, through verbal communication and signage.✓ Designate points of contact or coordinators to be the main contact upon the identification of positive cases and who are responsible for subsequent communication. Coordinators should be responsible for answering questions from students and employees regarding the COVID-19 public health emergency and plans implemented by the institution.✓ If possible, coordinators should also work closely with local health departments and other higher education institutions to monitor public health conditions and jointly develop monitoring strategies.

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Screening	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Implement mandatory health screening practices (e.g. questionnaire, temperature check) for employees, students, and, where practicable, scheduled visitors (e.g. on-campus tour groups) asking about, at minimum: (1) COVID-19 symptoms in past 14 days, (2) positive COVID-19 test in past 14 days, and/or (3) close or proximate contact with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 case in past 14 days. Assessment responses must be reviewed every day and such review must be documented.✓ Employees reporting to work on-campus must be screened on a daily basis.✓ Students must be screened periodically as determined by the higher education institution but are not required to be screened on a daily basis.✓ An individual who screens positive for COVID-19 exposure or symptoms must be immediately sent home, to their residence, or to the designated quarantine or isolation location with instructions or arrangement for health assessment and testing.✓ Immediately notify the state and local health departments of confirmed positive cases.✓ In the case of an individual testing positive, develop plans with local health departments to trace all contacts of the individual, in accordance with the New York State Contact Tracing Program. Confidentiality must be maintained as required by federal and state law and regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Test students, faculty, and/or student-facing staff for COVID-19 using a molecular diagnostic test prior to or upon arrival. If feasible, re-test individuals 7 to 14 days after arrival, or upon development of symptoms.<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is recommended, at a minimum, to test students who are arriving from other states/countries upon arrival.• Re-test individuals arriving from other states/countries 7-14 days after arrival or upon development of symptoms.• Individuals who become symptomatic but have a negative COVID-19 test results should continue to stay home or in isolation while sick and consult their health care provider about the need for additional testing and when to resume normal activities.• In residential higher education institutions, determine whether to separate students upon arrival until they can be tested and test results return negative.✓ Perform screening remotely (e.g. by telephone or electronic survey) to the extent possible.✓ Develop testing systems on campus or self-testing systems, as able.✓ Implement health screening practices for unscheduled visitors (e.g. members of the public allowed to use campus facilities).✓ Temperature checks may be conducted per Equal Employment Opportunity Commission or DOH guidelines.✓ Screeners should be provided and use PPE, including at a minimum, an acceptable face covering.✓ Offer optional contact tracing and tracking technology (e.g. mobile applications) to streamline contact tracing and communication processes among the workforce and student body.

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	Mandatory	Recommended Best Practices
Screening (cont'd)		<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Partner with local health departments to train staff and students to undertake contact tracing efforts for on-campus populations, where feasible.✓ Refer to DOH's "Interim Guidance for Public and Private Employees Returning to Work Following COVID-19 Infection or Exposure" regarding protocols and policies for individuals seeking to return to work or class after a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 or after individuals have had close or proximate contact with a person with COVID-19

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